GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CIVIL AVIATION
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:216
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IMPACT OF BAN ON USE OF PAKISTANI AIRSPACE
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Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether in the wake of restrictions imposed by India and Pakistan on the use of their respective air space, Air India and Indian Airlines have formulated any strategy to ensure that their flights to the Gulf countries are not affected adversely;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the other steps taken to minimise the losses on this count; and

(d) the extent of increase in the operational cost of their flights operating through new routes for gulf countries, London and Paris from Delhi

Answer

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM & CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN)

(a), (b) and (c): The flights of Air India and Indian Airlines between certain Indian locations and destinations in the West (Saudi Arabia, Gulf, Middle East Europe, UK &USA) are avoiding Pakistan Air Space in either direction resulting in additional flying time of 30-60 minutes in each direction. This results in more fuel, increased flight time and other associated problems like crew cost etc. The fares, however have not been increased as it would place the carriers at a comparative disadvantage vis-a-vis other international carriers. There is, however, saving on payment of aeronautical charges to Pakistan. Air India has temporarily shifted its operations from Delhi to Mumbai to minimise losses. A shuttle flight between Delhi and Mumbai is being operated for Delhi passengers. Similarly, Indian Airlines is utilizing the Jamnagar airport belonging to Ministry of Defence as an enroute alternate airport for their scheduled flights to Gulf round the clock to overcome the problem of limited number of Extended Twin Engine Operations (ETOPs) approved aircraft in their fleet. Indian Airlines is also expediting ETOPs training to the Pilots and flight despatchers.

(d) The additional cost incurred by Air India and Indian Airlines due to diversion of flights on account of closure of Pakistani air space is approximately Rs.80 lakhs and Rs.16.50 lakhs per week respectively.